

D C B W E B P A G E T E A M

Working Paper #1

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CHARTER

Draft Charter (proposed by J. Batterson)

Develop an approach and implementation plan for completing and maintaining the DCB Web Home Page that addresses CSF's in the SQF.

Estimated time frame and commitment: start immediately with delivery in 2 weeks.
(50% commitment)

Charter Requirements

The fundamental elements of a team charter should include -

- 1) objective
- 2) timetable
- 3) approach
- 4) budget
- 5) exit criteria

The draft charter provides a rudimentary objective and timetable. However, additional clarification is needed regarding the objective and timetable and needs the addition of the other elements.

It is incumbent on the team to accept the draft charter as a starting point and suggest an alternative which meets the team's expectations and reflects its understanding of the draft charter.

Action Item #1

Discuss proposed charter and formulate proposal for next iteration.

FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES

Below are some of the key issues that will affect the actions and products of the DCB Web Page Team. They reflect the opinions and understanding of Marty Waszak and can serve as a basis for addressing the team charter and a framework for prioritizing issues and distributing tasks.

SQF - CSF (Critical Success Factors from the Strategic Quality Framework)

Customers (and Suppliers, e.g. grantees)

Stakeholders (including public)

Organization (Intranet)

The current DCB web site is mainly geared toward customers (and suppliers). There is very little there to support the organization or stakeholders. This is one area that needs a lot of thought.

The site can be readily enhanced to support the organization by adding an intranet feature (similar to LANTERN) that can only be accessed by DCB staff. This can include content like budgets, forms, planning documents, content development, working papers, T&A, site usage statistics and much more. What should be involved needs discussion. The more that is added the bigger job it is to maintain.

The area of stakeholder support is even more complicated. The content required to support the general public and politicians is very different than what we are used to. Perhaps we can have some content to describe to the lay person what we do, why it is important, and the value it adds to the community, the economy, the nation, the world. Maybe here is where multimedia might be best utilized.

Look and Feel. Continuity vs Originality. Corporate Image vs Personality

The look and feel of the DCB web page should serve to meet the objectives of the organization and the people who work within it. The degree to which these goals complement and conflict with each other is a complex issue.

A major aspect that is impacted by the look and feel decision is the effort and resources required to develop and maintain the site.

Following are some thoughts for the look and feel and can be used as a basis for team dialog.

The DCB site will have a distinctive look and feel throughout with limited opportunities for personal expression and creativity in the form of personal web pages. The look and feel will be controlled by following a style guide and templates that will be designed in collaboration with the staff.

The scale of the site should be limited enough to make maintenance a simple task but broad enough to effectively characterize the products, services, and value of branch activities to the Customers (and Suppliers), the Organization, and the Stakeholders.

The technologies used in the site should be representative of the high tech organization DCB is but yet conservative enough to reflect the fact that we are a government organization and to make site maintenance simple.

The level of technology has a direct bearing on the size, complexity, and cost of the web site. The more stuff we add the harder and costlier it will be to develop and maintain. However, if we do not use the medium effectively we risk appearing backward and out of touch. In my opinion we need to find a happy medium where we use the technologies that are available effectively to make our content as useful as possible. The key to a good web site is content and not flash! We should not aspire to have a web site that makes the "top 5% of all sites" or the "neat site of the day" but one that does a good job of supporting our work.

Maintenance of core site content will be the responsibility of the webmaster. This will involve keeping the site fairly current by updating links, removing dated materials, adding core material at the request of authors and management. It will also involve maintaining the style guide and templates for content submissions. The core site will not generally be accessible to the staff.

New content will by and large be generated by the staff (i.e., authors) to reflect their ongoing work, key findings and results, and information of interest. The content will be in several forms most of which will be developed using templates. Examples include research summaries, bibliographies, program descriptions, reports, meeting minutes, etc. Additional content reflecting the personality, creativity, and interests of each staff member will be allowed but will be separated from the core site in an appropriate way.

New content will generally be developed and located in an area accessible to the author and linked to the core site. When appropriate, content will be transferred to the core site. The author accessible area will also be the location of the author's personal pages.

The content should be controlled in such a way that visitors using the typical telecommunication technologies (e.g., 14.4 kB modems) can download the pages in a reasonable time (e.g., <15 secs).

HTML generation tools (HTML editors) are becoming as easy to use as word processors and will continue to improve thereby allowing anybody to produce content for a site. The difficulty lies in the added degrees of freedom afforded by HTML and its variants. What "works" is much harder to determine. Therefore, guidance in the form of template and style guides are very important.

Hardware and Software

The html server software, the supporting software (usage analysis tools, site maintenance tools, scripting tools (e.g., cgi, Java), html authoring tools, graphics and multimedia tools, databases, etc.), and the hardware hosting it have a major influence on the ease, effectiveness, and capabilities of a web site. Following are some thought on issues that should be considered.

Security

Access to the site may need to be controlled depending on the content that is included. If we add an intranet capability we have to keep the rest of the world

out. If we have information that is proprietary or otherwise sensitive we need to control that too. It would seem that all content be submitted with a proposed security level to ease the job of controlling access.

Space and Speed

If the site is to become a much bigger entity than it is today we must consider the expandability issue. If we add a lot on content and use the site for access to day to day information it may be better to have the server be separate from the other computational facilities. It would also allow the best software and hardware to be selected to make development and maintenance easier. This may make security easier to handle too. However, the expertise we have with Unix-based systems makes hosting the server on a Unix machine very attractive. In addition, the number and rate of hits will influence the speed of the server system.